

Doctor Who 2026

By Peter David Smith

I don't usually spend a lot of time thinking about Doctor Who story-lines. However, the current mystery has intrigued me sufficiently that I decided to make up my own version of what might happen in the 2026 episodes.

I have ventured into this area of speculation before. About 20 or 25 years ago I shared on social media the idea that Leela was The Doctor's mother, The Master was The Doctor's Son and therefore Susan's father and that The Master had become dictator of Gallifrey and a sadistic, abusive father to Susan, causing Susan's grandfather to rescue her and run away in a stolen Tardis to hide her on a version of Earth where The Master could never find her.

You won't be surprised to learn that Doctor Who fans really hated that complicated idea.

I made up a lot of stories like that one back in the early days of the 21st Century. I called them "anti-fan fiction". Whereas "fan fiction" is written by people who love the cult television shows I imagined that "anti-fan fiction" would be written by critics of the shows, trying to make the concepts a bit more interesting. A bit like the things that Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Millar were writing for Marvel Comics' Ultimate Universe in those days.

So I did a version of Buffy the Vampire Slayer where Buffy swaps places with two other slayers, one from medieval times and one from a Star Trek or Babylon Five style of future where all the starship crews are aware of the existence of vampires and demon dimensions. If realised it would have been a three episode adventure based on the old shell game or the card trick "Find the Lady".

I did a version of James Bond where the Brutalist architect Goldfinger has Bond strapped to a table with a laser beam getting closer and closer to cutting him in half. In my version of it the laser isn't stopped until it has already cauterised Bond's testicles and caused Bond to collapse into a comatose state.

He remains in a coma and is transferred to a nursing home where Moneypenny often visits him and weeps by his bedside. All of the other adventures where Bond's face keeps changing into the faces of Beauregard Maverick, Simon Templar and other characters are all in the distorted dreams and nightmares of Bond's comatose brain.

I wrote a surrealist version of "Rear Window" and a version of Star Trek where Rachel Garrett's Enterprise isn't destroyed but is split into two versions. One version scatters wreckage and appears destroyed while the alternate version is thrown into a universe where Starfleet doesn't permit women to be captains of starships.

After Garrett and her crew have proved the Starfleet admirals of that universe wrong and have changed history forever they then attempt to get back to their own timeline but, instead, spend the rest of their lives jumping from timeline to timeline, like Sam Beckett looking for the leap home.

These are all examples of my Speculativist agenda of taking the “society of the spectacle” to pieces and re-territorialising the pieces as rhizomes which liberate the trick-cycles of the mind.

So. Doctor Who 2026. What’s happening there?

I’m going to make a prediction which is highly unlikely to come true. In this prediction I’m going to connect various unexplained loose-ends of Doctor Who plots.

The Basis of the 2026 story:

2005: *The Parting of the Ways*: Rose Tyler absorbs the energy of the time vortex and the Christopher Eccleston Doctor takes that energy from Rose with a kiss.

Time War: The Time Lords look for a moment in time which they can surgically remove from the time line and use as a weapon against the Daleks. They find the moment when the time vortex energy is passing from Rose to the Doctor. They cut that moment from the timeline and copy it into the form of a weapon, which they then christen “The Moment”.

As a result of this and other actions taken during the Time War various cracks and time schisms occur, leading to a splitting of The Doctor into various “bi-generations” and paradoxes.

1972: *Day of the Daleks*: The John Pertwee Doctor changes history, causing the timeline of “The Dalek Invasion of Earth” (1964) to have never occurred, thus leaving The Doctor’s granddaughter Susan stranded in an orphan timeline which would be unaffected by The Time War.

2006: *Doomsday*: Rose Tyler, now in a parallel universe, travels to Norway to say a final farewell to The David Tennant Doctor. He is using the power of a supernova to communicate through a weakness in the wall between the two universes.

The universe where Rose now lives is not the same one where the Daleks invaded Earth because that one would be devastated by a global war which weakened Earth’s defences and softened Earth up for a Dalek invasion. However, the message The Doctor sends across that gap is also being overheard by his granddaughter Susan in her separated timeline. The weakness in the wall between the universes reaches in more than one direction through the Void.

So Susan now knows that her grandfather is still out there somewhere but no longer on the same timeline.

2024: *Joy to the World*: The Ncuti Gatwa Doctor helps a “star seed” to be planted and grow in deep space. It is a source of great power.

2025: *The Reality War*: The Ncuti Gatwa Doctor returns to the part of space where the star seed has grown. The Ncuti Gatwa Doctor is visited by the Jodie Whittaker Doctor to tell him that all the messing with reality is leading to a time schism.

The Ncuti Gatwa Doctor gives up his life in order to release the time energy necessary to adjust the structure of reality and avoid the destruction which the time schism would cause. As he regenerates he is connected to all of the paradoxes and cracks of time which need to be resolved and healed. These various paradoxes include the Timelord weapon “The Moment” and also he is connected through The Void to the parallel universe where Rose Tyler still lives with a human duplicate of The Doctor.

A body swap occurs.

At the same moment that The Doctor is regenerating The Doctor and Rose Tyler swap bodies.

The Doctor now looks like Rose Tyler and doesn’t understand why this has happened. He/She/They go to the Tardis console to get information to help solve the mystery.

Meanwhile in the parallel universe Rose Tyler is now in the Timelord body of the Doctor’s next regeneration. Rose Tyler’s outward appearance is now whatever the new Doctor is going to look like. Could be Jo Martin. Could be Paul McGann. Could be Kermit the Frog. We don’t know.

Whatever happens in the 2026 episodes it is pretty much certain to be different to any of my ideas. Whatever happens, one thing is certain. Speculation is great fun!

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I don’t own the copyrights to Doctor Who, Star Trek, James Bond or Buffy the Vampire Slayer but imagine how rich I would be if I did!

I’d be able to afford train fares!